

parts of this country and the need for this Congress, before we leave, to do something more significant for agriculture and to do it in a way that provides direct assistance to farmers now.

I will conclude with this. The reason we cannot wait is the credit crunch is real and now. No. 2, there is nothing to wait for because the new farm program, the rules and regulations that we passed recently, will not even be finished being written, let alone to be able to receive applications for aid, until next year. That will be too late.

So for Jay Hardwick, the farmers I represent, the farmers in the South, I am going to stand here for quite a while and talk about their situation and say that, most certainly, if we can spend a few weeks trying to figure out how to save the financial markets and Wall Street, we can spend a little bit of time and a little bit of money trying to help farmers who did not take out subprime loans, who managed their risk well and got caught in circumstances well beyond their control that were not manmade but were of nature's making.

The facts of Wall Street and the financial crisis were not natural disasters. We all had a part in, I guess, making that happen. I am not here to point fingers or to blame anyone else. But for these farmers, this was not manmade. The men who grew these crops did everything they were supposed to do, their families did everything they were supposed to do, and the rains came. If we do not give them help, they will not make it until the spring.

I will be speaking about this for quite some time this weekend. We are grateful for the aid we received but there needs to be some changes before we leave, and I am going to do what I can to make that possible.

I yield the floor.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AMENDMENTS ACT

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise to mark the enactment of the Americans With Disabilities Act amendments Act, S. 3406. Passed with overwhelming, bipartisan support in the Senate and House of Representatives, this important bill was signed into law this week. I am proud and honored to celebrate the occasion with my colleagues, particularly Senator HARKIN and Senator HATCH, who worked so hard to craft the legislation and help guide it through Congress. The disability, civil rights, and business stakeholders behind this legislation deserve our recognition as well.

We are all part of a nation built on the promise of equal rights, justice, and opportunity for everyone. Eighteen years ago, we took a historic step toward fulfilling that promise with the passage of the original Americans with Disabilities Act. Unfortunately, we didn't expect then that Supreme Court decisions would narrow the law's scope contrary to congressional intent. As a

result, the lower courts have now gone so far as to rule that people with amputation, muscular dystrophy, epilepsy, diabetes, multiple sclerosis, cancer, and even intellectual disabilities are not disabled. The Supreme Court decisions further imposed an excessively strict and demanding standard to the definition of disability, although Congress intended the ADA to apply broadly to fulfill its purpose.

The ADA Amendments Act finally rights these wrongs. For one, the new law directs the courts toward a broader meaning and application of the ADA's definition of disability. More major life activities will also be included in the definition of disability, so that more people with disabilities will be covered by the ADA. The amendments further clarify that the ADA covers people who use "mitigating measures," such as medications or prosthetics, to treat their conditions or adapt to their disability. Otherwise, they will continue to be in a catch-22 that forces them to choose between managing their disabilities or staying protected from job discrimination. No one should have to make that choice.

Thanks to the newly enacted amendments, the ADA's focus can return to where it should be—the question of whether the discrimination occurred, not whether the person with a disability is eligible in the first place. Simply put, the ADA Amendments Act restores the landmark Americans with Disabilities Act to the civil rights law it was meant to be.

Mr. President, we cannot rest on our laurels as we look ahead to the future. Today we reaffirm the principle that discrimination based on disability doesn't belong in the workplace, but we cannot ignore the low employment rates for people with disabilities who want to work. They want to achieve to the best extent of their potential and enjoy economic self-sufficiency, but this piece of the American dream remains just beyond their reach. Clearly, there is still much work to be done if our Nation is to realize the ADA's vision of full inclusion and acceptance of all people.

So let us renew our commitment to the goals and ideals of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I look forward to continuing this effort on behalf of the American people, including all those in Nevada and throughout the country celebrating the enactment of the Americans with Disabilities Act Amendments Act.

110TH BIRTHDAY OF SEARCHLIGHT, NEVADA

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I rise today in honor of a very special event—the 110th birthday celebration of my hometown, Searchlight, NV. My colleagues have heard me speak often of Searchlight, and they all know how proud I am to call it home.

On July 20, 1898, Searchlight was established like many towns across the

West were—as a mining district. George Frederick Colton had struck gold the year before, bringing a rush of miners to the area. Over the next 10 years, Searchlight provided millions of dollars of gold to the world and grew to be one of the most populated areas in southern Nevada. During the mines' most prosperous years, Searchlight was one of the most modern, well-appointed towns in the State.

While Searchlight's mining boom may have ended 100 years ago, the pioneering spirit lives on in our small community. And on Saturday, October 4, 2008, the residents of Searchlight will commemorate the passing of the town's 110th year with a BBQ dinner and various activities. I join the community in thanking the Searchlight Museum Guild for organizing this celebration.

In particular, I would like to recognize my friend Jane Overy, curator of the Searchlight Historic Museum. Jane was instrumental in the founding of the museum, and she continues her work as Searchlight's resident historian in the planning of this year's birthday celebration program, "Sharing Searchlight's Historic Memories." In addition to her work with the museum, Jane is involved with many town activities and is a well-known and well-loved figure in our community. She is a Navy veteran and she and her husband Carl, an Air Force veteran, have been very active members of Nevada's proud military community. Jane currently serves as the Department Commander for Nevada Disabled American Veterans. She has been a dedicated collector and preserver of Searchlight's history, and I am grateful for her contributions to the community.

In my office in the Capitol, I keep a picture of my childhood home in Searchlight. It serves as a reminder of how my hometown has shaped my work on behalf of Nevada throughout my career in Congress. I am proud to recognize the historic occasion of Searchlight's 110th birthday, and I wish its residents a successful and enjoyable event.

TRIBUTE TO SENATORS

Mr. AKAKA. Mr. President, today I wish to make a few comments about some of our departing colleagues who will no longer be with us next year. I have known some of them for just a little while, others I have known for a long time. And, to all of them I bid a fond farewell and mahalo for their service to their State and to this country. They are dear colleagues and friends of mine and I know that even if they leave this fine establishment, our friendships will continue long into the future.

The Senators that I am referring to are Senator JOHN WARNER from Virginia, Senator PETE DOMENICI from New Mexico, Senator LARRY CRAIG from Idaho, Senator CHUCK HAGEL from Nebraska, and Senator WAYNE ALLARD